

fullness of the tree, the tree color and foliage condition, and species characteristics of needle retention and branch pliability. Of course, access to the tree for ease of cutting, loading, and transporting are also considered.

This year's 118-year-old Sierra White Fir tree is 63 feet tall. It weighs 8,300 pounds and traveled 4,280 miles from California to Washington, D.C. Along the way, it made 23 stops; 13 in California and 11 across the nation. An additional 100 companion trees were delivered to the capital and placed in federal offices and congressional offices. They also transported the tree donated by the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians to the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. The tree's arrival received international press and showed the rest of the world that our nation has the freedom to celebrate a religious holiday at the Capitol.

In addition, the Stanislaus National Forest Service held a Statewide Song Search and Art Contest. They collected 2,500 outdoor and 2,200 indoor Christmas ornaments made by Californians for the Tree. The use of recycled and natural materials was encouraged. Also, they conducted a food drive for Gallup, New Mexico, the third poorest city in the nation. The statewide food drive involved several food banks from throughout the state that donated a pallet of food as well as collected food at every stop made in California. The food was transported to Gallup, New Mexico, and the community was very appreciative of the more than 14 pallets of food that the team delivered on November 16.

The Stanislaus National Forest also coordinated all the donations to fund the harvesting, transport, and tour of the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree. Additionally, there were many that assisted in the momentous occasion that made it possible. Special recognition should go to Maria Benech, 2011 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree Coordinator, who worked tirelessly on the project. Central Sierra Arts Council helped with the statewide song search and Art Competition. Gini Siebert of Out of Hand helped create over 1,000 clay ornaments for the Tree and the indoor trees by garnering donations from Sonora businesses to pay for classroom art projects. The Sonora Garden Club made the 48 sprays that were given as gifts at each community the Tree visited across the United States. Fire on the Mountain were critical in the November 5 Tree Cutting Celebration in Sonora. Mark Patton, Frank Gilbeau, and Danny Hess cut and laid the Tree down on the special cradle without breaking a branch in the 17 degree weather. The City of Sonora hosted a parade and escort on November 5. And finally, Cal Trans and CHP who helped the Stanislaus National Forest Service move the tree from Point A to Barstow.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and commending the Stanislaus National Forest Service for a job well done in supplying the 2011 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree.

HONORING DAN TERRELL

HON. TODD ROKITA

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 19, 2011

Mr. ROKITA. Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege as the representative of Indiana's

Fourth District to rise and pay tribute to Mr. Dan Terrell, mayor of Mitchell, Indiana.

Mayor Terrell is a man of deep civic conviction, a loving father of 6, and a devoted grandfather of 17.

Dan Terrell was born in Mitchell, Indiana, and has remained there his entire life. He has never lost the small town conservative spirit that growing up in the Heartland of America gave him.

Following his retirement from the Canadian Pacific Railroad, Dan Terrell was ready to concentrate fully on helping his hometown overcome challenges that so many small cities and towns have faced: lost businesses, sidewalks that were unsafe or non-existent, infrastructure in total disrepair, drinking water barely able to pass State regulations. During Mayor Terrell's four years in office these, and many other concerns, have not only been addressed but have been corrected.

Besides the tangible accomplishments, his representation of the city as he traveled throughout Indiana offered his constituents a mayor they could be proud of.

His leadership and vision will be truly missed as he leaves the mayor's office. His love and his devotion for his hometown will continue. Mr. Speaker, it has been a true honor to stand in tribute and offer my thanks to the civic service of Mayor Dan Terrell, one of Indiana's best mayors and my close friend.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1540, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great regret that I rise to oppose this Defense Authorization Conference Report. This is the first Defense Authorization Conference Report I have opposed since I was first elected in 2002.

I cannot support this Conference Report because it limits the tools available to detain and prosecute terror suspects and could have the unintended effect of weakening our national security. As currently written, the language in the Report also creates potentially dangerous and costly confusion about the roles of the military and law enforcement officials during the arrest of terror suspects. At the same time, certain provisions leave open the possibility that innocent U.S. citizens could be wrongfully and indefinitely detained at the direction of the President without appropriate access to civilian courts.

The mix of tools currently available to the Executive Branch has strengthened our national security. Civilian prosecutors and federal courts have convicted and imprisoned hundreds of terrorists, while the military tribunals have convicted only a half-dozen. Why would we want to tip the scales toward a less effective enforcement tool? Why tie our own hands?

Sections 1021 and 1022 of the Report will generate confusion as to whether the military or the FBI and civilian law enforcement agencies have custody over terror suspects. Today, in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Com-

mittee, FBI Director Mueller expressed concern and uncertainty about the confusing directives in the Report that could cause misunderstandings between the FBI and the military regarding the detention of covered individuals during the crucial early moments of an arrest when information gathering is most important. He described an example where a terrorist arrest in a city like New York could cause unnecessary confusion and conflict between city law enforcement and the military because New York City is not a military controlled area. He also worries about how the situation would play out if a group of detainees—some covered, others not—are captured at the same time and what impact this might have on the handling of their cases.

There is also much confusion about the indefinite detention authority in section 1021 of the measure. Some say that this section does not apply to U.S. citizens, but if that was the intention of the conferees, American citizens should have been specifically exempted the way they were in Section 1022 regarding mandatory military detention. The fact that American citizens were expressly exempted from mandatory military detention under section 1022—but not exempted under section 1021—suggests that Congress is implicitly endorsing the idea that American citizens may be indefinitely detained under the Authorization for Use of Military Force. If Congress is going to spell out the rules of arrest and detention, it should have made clear that American citizens may not be indefinitely detained without due process of law.

How U.S. citizens are to be treated when detained as terror suspects and the question of jurisdictional leadership during terror-related arrests are matters of such supreme national consequence that they should not have been expeditiously appended to a National Defense Authorization Conference Report. These important issues should have had the benefit of debate and close examination that can only happen during regular order.

RECOGNIZING MR. TODD LAVOGUE AND HIS STUDENTS AS HAS- TINGS' HEROES

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 19, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Todd LaVogue and the students in his social studies class at Roosevelt Middle School in West Palm Beach. Mr. LaVogue recently engaged his students in Amnesty International's letter-writing campaign for human rights. Mr. LaVogue and his students joined people of good conscience around the world in writing letters to government officials in many countries, urging them to release political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. The students were able to see what such efforts can accomplish when the government of the nation of Myanmar released opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi after many years of house arrest.

By expressing their concern for people improperly and unfairly held in captivity by authoritarian governments around the world, Mr. LaVogue and his students are shining examples of the best in humankind. They are people deserving of respect and admiration from all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of Mr. LaVogue and his students, and I am pleased to name them true Hastings' Heroes.

HONORING TUOLUMNE BAND OF
ME-WUK INDIANS

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 19, 2011

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians for the integral part they played in bringing the 2011 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree to Washington, DC.

Since 1970, it has become an honor for one of the National Forests to be asked to provide the Capitol Tree. The appointed National Forest, in turn, engages help from diverse partners throughout its respective State. The opportunity to provide the Capitol Christmas Tree becomes a state-wide celebration and civic event, leaving a lasting impression on all who are fortunate enough to be involved.

2011 is only the fourth time California has contributed the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree, the last time was in 1995. Known as "The People's Tree," the 2011 Capitol Christmas Tree was harvested from the Stanislaus National Forest located in the Central Sierra Nevada Mountains. The Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians performed a blessing of the tree prior to it being harvested. The members of the tribe cut and laid the tree down on a special cradle without breaking a branch in the frigid 17 degree weather.

In addition to assisting with the harvesting and blessing of the 2011 Capitol Christmas Tree, the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians also harvested and blessed their own tree. The 20-foot tall White Spruce was hand-picked by the Elders to be donated to the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. It is the first time that a Native American tribe from California has donated a tree to the museum. It traveled 4,280 miles from California to Washington, DC making 23 stops along the way. At two of the stops, the Me-Wuk's had tribal gift exchanges with two other Indian tribes. The tree's arrival received international press and showed the rest of the world that our nation has the freedom to celebrate a religious holiday at the Capitol.

A notable moment for the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians was being able to perform a tribal dance in the Library of Congress. Their performance marks the first time that a Native American tribe has danced in the historic building. The dancers that participated were Robert Millis, Louis Millis, Robert Burciaga, Miguel Campos, Joey Guinn, Shanta Millis, Tricia Guinn, Heather Palmer, Darla Berg, Janell Lavell, Melissa Wiest, Lucy Parker, and Ursula Jones. Special Recognition should be extended to Reba Fuller, the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians Government Specialist, who worked tirelessly on the project and traveled with the tree until it was properly placed.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and commending the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians for their historic journey with the 2011 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1540,
NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZA-
TION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I will vote for H.R. 1540, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, because it contains a number of important advancements. I am extremely disappointed, however, that we were unable to achieve more in our effort to change U.S. policy on the treatment of detainees.

H.R. 1540 contains a number of areas of progress, including a pay increase for our troops, important new protections for military personnel who are victims of sexual assault, concrete requirements for the Department of Defense to strengthen its audit-readiness, and increased cooperation with Israel on ballistic missile defense. In addition, it contains the toughest sanctions yet on the Central Bank of Iran to pressure the Iranian regime from continuing its pursuit of nuclear weapons. And, it blunts the defense spending increases of past years with significant cuts that are consistent with the end of the war in Iraq and the winding down of our involvement in Afghanistan.

When the House first considered H.R. 1540 earlier this year, I voted against it because of its misguided language on detainees. The bill's provision for military detention of American citizens was simply antithetical to American values. I joined with nearly three dozen Members of Congress in urging that the language on detainees be removed from the final version of the legislation.

I commend President Obama for insisting on a number of improvements, including a prohibition on military detention of U.S. citizens and lawful residents, the removal of language that would have banned the use of civilian courts to prosecute Qaeda suspects, and the elimination of language that would have provided an expanded authorization for the use of military force.

For these reasons I will vote for H.R. 1540. I will closely monitor the law's implementation, however, and press for further changes that are needed to protect our civil liberties and the rule of law, which Americans have fought to preserve at such great cost.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL HOME-
LESS PERSONS' MEMORIAL DAY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 19, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, which will be observed on December 21, 2011. This day has been observed annually since 1990 to remember those who have lost their lives due to the tragedy of homelessness, and to bring attention to the need to end homelessness. Last December, the House of Representatives passed H. Con. Res. 325, a resolution that I introduced that supports the goals and ideals

of National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. I am proud to recognize this important day again this year, and express my deepest sympathies to those who have lost loved ones to this tragedy.

The current state of our economy has greatly exacerbated national homelessness. It is estimated that over half a million people experience homelessness on any given night in the United States. Of those in the homeless population, 12 percent are veterans, and 17 percent are considered chronically homeless. These numbers highlight the fact that we are witnessing a growing human rights crisis right here at home. This is a crisis that cannot be ignored.

Mr. Speaker, as Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Homelessness, I understand that we must and can do more to end homelessness. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing National Homeless Persons' Memorial to prevent and end homelessness.

HONORING G. KENNETH CAR-
PENTER AND HAROLD FARRING-
TON, JR., ON THEIR INDUCTION
TO THE VETERANS HALL OF
FAME

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 19, 2011

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor, recognize, and congratulate G. Kenneth Carpenter and Harold Farrington, Jr., on their induction into the Veterans Hall of Fame.

In 1967, Kenneth volunteered to serve his country in Vietnam. After returning home, he found his calling and joined the clergy. During his 25 years as Senior Minister at Mystic's Union Baptist Church, Mr. Carpenter dedicated himself to his community. He helped found the Mystic Area Shelter & Hospitality, providing a safe haven to more than 800 people and preventing hundreds more from becoming homeless. He also led the group that created the Sunshine Kitchen in Groton, which served free meals to local people in need for 18 years. In addition, Mr. Carpenter co-founded the Southeastern Connecticut Clergy Association to encourage people of different faiths to work together and volunteered to counsel veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Harold Farrington, Jr., served in the Army's combat infantry in Vietnam. In 1968, he returned home after a mortar round blew up in his left hand. Mr. Farrington spent five years undergoing painful bone and skin grafts and tendon transplants. Harold was so impressed with the care he received from the Veterans benefits counselor that he decided to go work for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Over the next 30 years, Mr. Farrington was dedicated to ensuring that veterans and their families were able to receive the disability compensation, benefits, and services to which they were entitled. Harold established Veteran's Services offices at the Naval Submarine Base in Groton, the Coast Guard Academy in New London and the Naval Station in Newport, RI, to help service-members transition to civilian life.

The exemplary contributions that G. Kenneth Carpenter and Harold Farrington, Jr.,